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PEABODY

The Duties and Dangers of Those  
Who are Born Free.

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1833  
A. Hale

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MR. PEABODY'S

ELECTION SERMON.

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*The duties and dangers of those who are born free.*

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A

# SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

ANNUAL ELECTION,

JANUARY 2, 1833,

BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY LEVI LINCOLN,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR THOMAS L. WINTHROP,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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BY WILLIAM B. O. PEABODY.

Minister in Springfield.

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**Boston :**

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

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1833.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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IN SENATE, JANUARY 3, 1833.

*Ordered*, That Messrs. MERRILL and HUDSON, be a Committee, to wait on the Rev. W. B. O. PEABODY, and present him the thanks of the Senate for his discourse delivered yesterday before the Government of the Commonwealth, and to request a copy thereof for the press.      Attest.

CHAS. CALHOUN, *Clerk*.





## SERMON.

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“THE CHIEF CAPTAIN ANSWERED, WITH A GREAT SUM OBTAINED I THIS FREEDOM; AND PAUL SAID, BUT I WAS FREE BORN.”

Acts, 22d chap. 28th verse.

THOUGH the Roman state, at this time, retained no vestige of its former liberty, it was still the boast of the Roman citizen, that he was born free. He was envied and respected by those who had never possessed this freedom as a birthright, and by those who had bought it with a price. As soon as St. Paul declares that he had inherited this distinction, the very sound of the word fills the soldiers and their tribune with dread. They unclench their grasp: they unbind his chains: their manner changes at once from the insolence of tyrants to the humility of slaves. But this privilege, so longed for by those who do not possess it, is too often under-estimated by those who were born free. I do not mean to say that the apostle undervalued it: he was not the

man to forget or abandon his own rights : he learned a different lesson from his Master, who, when Pilate said to him in derision, *What ! are you a king, then ?* replied with unequalled majesty, *Yes, I am a king !*

Those who are born in a land of liberty, regard freedom as a very simple thing. It seems to them the easiest suggestion of nature, the first dictate of a nation's heart : and yet, in practice, we see, that so far from being a simple attainment, it is the very last result at which civil experience arrives. Nothing can be clearer than the truth, that man has a right to be free ; but to reconcile liberty with order,—to define the provinces of freedom and submission,—to bring a million different wills to choose the one right way ;—how to do this, is a problem, which cannot be solved without ages of time and hosts of intellectual power. We boast that we have solved it here ; if so, it is not our own happy discovery ; it is the result of a thousand endeavors ; it is wrought out by the efforts of all generations ; it is the last of a bright chain of experiments ; and there are almost as many steps in the demonstration, as there are years in the age of the world.

It is, then, not an easy thing, nor a trifling privilege, to be free. What is a free state ? It is one which lives under the government of laws and not

of men ; it is one in which all are equal, as respects their civil rights ; it is one, in which the liberty of each is abridged as little as possible, and his responsibility extended as far as possible ; it is one, which gives the widest range to the moral and intellectual powers, while it restrains and governs injurious passions ; it is one, in which the prosperity of the state depends upon the conduct and character of its individual members, and therefore each is held directly responsible to the Most High. The materials which form the fabric of a free state, are not bound together by external force ; they are built in an arch, where every stone bears its part of the burden, and is essential to the firmness of the whole. While each retains its place, any pressure can be borne, and any shock resisted ; but the failure of any affects the stability of all : let any one be unsound, highest or lowest, key-stone or any other, it loses something of its power to withstand the force of the elements and the waste of time.

Now, for the first suggestion of such a state, we are indebted to religion. The Hebrew commonwealth stands alone in the ancient history of man. It contained some of the essential elements of a free state ; it distributed civil rights in as just proportions as it then could ; it allowed no one to injure or oppress another ; it made the prosperity of the

whole depend upon the conduct of the people, and held every one directly accountable to God. It is true, that the system was imperfect ; as our Saviour says, much was allowed them on account of the hardness of their hearts, which otherwise would have been forbidden ; but every thing about it was preparatory and prophetic ; it was meant to lead to something better ; and it was, in truth, compared with any thing else which then existed, *a light shining in a dark place, till the day should dawn and the day-star rise*. Whoever will consider the Hebrew constitution,—how it declared that the prosperity of a nation consisted not in the grandeur of its monuments, the splendor of its victories, nor the sweep of its bounds ;—how it provided for education, improvement, and the arts of peace ;—how it insisted on a sense of duty in every man, every woman, every family and every tribe, as essential to the general welfare, will admire the divine wisdom with which the foundations of that state were laid, and will confess, that for the first suggestion of a free state, we are indebted to religion.

The system, of which we see the cold dawning in the Hebrew state, was expanded by Christianity into the perfect day. Slowly, however ; for though our religion contains and teaches all the principles of freedom, it was long before its moral influences

could reach the hearts of men. There is no doubt, that the Christian religion has always been preparing the way for an equality of civil rights. When it taught men that kings were but the vassals of a mightier power; when it taught them to bow the knee to God, and to Him alone; when it directed every man to do to others as he would have others do to him; it was teaching, all the while, the lessons of freedom. It did not tell its disciples to withstand oppressors, because it removes all evils by general improvement, not by direct resistance; it did not show them how to exercise civil rights, because they did not possess them. Still, ever since the star in the east first rose, the vallies have been rising and the mountains sinking low; every man learns that he is his own master, and that his first allegiance is due to God: those who have this feeling, and power to act upon it, will call no man master, and are at once substantially free; and our religion, by teaching this truth, has sown the seed, which is ripening into a harvest-home of liberty, humanity, and happiness to men.

Neither can any free state subsist in its freedom, without religion. I do not mean religious establishments and forms. By religion, I understand a knowledge of our duty, both to God and man; and since Christianity has made that duty plainer, and



enforced it more powerfully than any other religion, I would say, that every free state, in order to endure, must be built on Jesus Christ—the Rock of ages. For, consider, I pray you, what a state is ; it is not a mechanical construction, with self-moving powers ; not a system, engrossed on tables of parchment or of stone ; a state consists of men ; a free state consists of men, who can govern themselves ; and when I say that the state cannot exist without religion, I do not mean that religion must be found in their statute book or bill of rights, but that it must dwell and have power in their hearts, because this is the only way in which a state can be influenced by religion. The people are the state : their rulers are men whom they employ, because they trust and honor them ; but whatever power they delegate, they retain the right to resume it, and thus the sceptre—the sovereignty—never departs from the people's hands. And I would ask, if they ought not to feel some responsibility with all this unbounded power ? Responsible to man they cannot be ; there is no human authority above them ; so, that without religion—without the sense of duty to God, and the feeling that they are accountable to God,—there is nothing to restrain those passions which bring men and nations to ruin. If you say that education will sustain the state, let me remind

you, that religion is the education of the moral powers ; you do not think that a knowledge of arts and sciences is sufficient : no education, but that which teaches the duty and destiny of man, is extensive enough for the purpose : and such instruction, in our rights, duties, obligations and powers, as members of the community and subjects of the Most High, belongs to the province of religion.

But, unhappily, the importance of religion in our civil relations, so far from being universally felt, is even doubted, or at least questioned, because so many unfortunate and fatal attempts have been made to effect an union of church and state in various nations. If, by the church we are always to understand men, who belong to the lodges and encampments of religious party,—men, enslaved to the opinions of sects and the dictation of masters,—certainly nothing could be more pernicious, than that such persons should be the state and command its mighty powers. But, if you use the word church, in what ought to be, and will be its meaning ; if you regard it as consisting of men, who are governed by the liberal, just, and unambitious principles of religion—of men, resembling Jesus Christ their master,—then it would evidently be well that the state also should consist of such members ; in other words, that the church and state should be one.

But now, when churches regard themselves as corporate bodies, with chartered rights, and with interests distinct from those of other men,—now, when to be a member of a church, is not necessarily the same thing with being a conscientious and real Christian,—now, such an union would be death to freedom, and must be firmly resisted by the free. Draw, then, the line, broad and deep, between Christianity and Christians; between Christianity as you find it in the gospel, and Christianity as you find it in the conduct and lives of Christians. Disarm all sects—our own, and all others—of civil power as sects, for it cannot be trusted in our hands; but, at the same time, let the influence of Christianity in the state—that is, in the men who are the state,—be entire, unresisted and almighty.

I have said so much of religion, because I propose to speak of the duties and dangers of those who are born free, and because it should be understood, that all our duties are duties of religion. In our civil and public, as well as our domestic and personal relations, Christianity expects every man to do his duty, and reminds him that he must answer to God.

First: it is the duty of those who are born free, to learn the worth of freedom. We undervalue every privilege which we possess; we cannot tell how to



estimate it, without such attention as many will not give, or such hardship and privation as they may never know. Freedom is to the spirit, like health to the frame; no other blessing can be enjoyed without it. When the sick is imprisoned in his chamber, the fool says in his heart, "He has kind attentions and a luxurious bed; what can he wish for more?" and yet every breeze whispers to him, what a privilege it is to be abroad in the open fields of nature: every waving bough beckons him out to see the glorious world, and breathe the free air of heaven; but there he must remain, bound to his bed of torture, constantly reminded of blessings which he may never again enjoy. Have we never expressed similar surprise, that nations should rise against oppression? have we never said of any people, "they have peace and plenty, what can they wish for more?" They answer, as with the voice of many waters, that they wish for that liberty which God and nature gave them: while they long for it without hope, or while they are sick at heart with the hope deferred, the world seems to them like a dungeon: and they are ready to be baptized with blood, if they can but bear the name of free.

If our fathers understood its value better than we, the reason was, that they bought it with a great price. When they left the house of bondage, they

had not where to lay their head. They were compelled to count the cost of freedom,—to say what they would give in exchange for it ; they bought it with exile and sorrow ; they afterwards redeemed it with blood ; and they never repented their choice, for they set its value so high, that they determined within themselves that it was better to sleep under the straw-built shed—better even to sleep in the dust, than not to be free. Thus their attachment to liberty became a deep and burning passion ; it grew ardent, strong, and almost fierce as the young eagle, in his high and dreary dwelling among the storms. Is it so at the present day ? This attachment is not proved by the flashing of bonfires, nor the glancing of banners ; the bell may be swung and the cannon thunder, long after there has ceased to be any meaning in the sounds : the crowd, with its acclamations, may be as indifferent to real liberty, as the child who beats his little drum. For freedom is independence of soul ; it is an intellectual spirit ; it is at all times solemn and thoughtful ; when challenged, it is stern and high : it is a spirit, therefore, far more likely to be found in those who are bearing its cross and fighting its battles, than in those who enjoy the victory, gained for them in other times, and by other hands.

If liberty were license—if freedom were the absence of restraint, it would not have any value ; it would not be an object of desire, but of dread. But, so far from this, it is the right to restrain ourselves : it is the right to do what we believe is right ; so far from releasing us from obligation, it breaks down every power that stands between us and heaven, and prevents our feeling a direct responsibility to God. So that it is a trust rather than a possession ; a blessing to be answered for, as well as enjoyed. And, if man can never learn its importance, till he has held his life and fortune at the pleasure of another—till his conscience has been, as far as it can be, under the direction of another's will, those who become insensible to its value, must not complain, if they are driven through the same stern discipline again ; for they will need and deserve to be worn by the continual stroke of oppression, drained by the demands of powerful extortion, and trampled under the bloodshod march of glory.

The second duty of those who are born free, is to remember their responsibility to God. Reason and religion both say, that *to whom much is given, of him shall much be required*. Whatever the privilege may be, it is a trust confided to our hands. It is not ours ; it is given with conditions and directions, with which we must comply : our obligation enlarg-

es with our power ; the owner of a thousand talents has a thousand times as much to answer for as the owner of one. In lands, where the private man has no civil influence,—where he cannot make his voice heard in public deliberations,—where he can only bear the results, and not direct the movements of the system, he is no more responsible for the action of government than for the march of the hosts of heaven. He may be forgiven, if he folds his hands and acquiesces in what he cannot alter. But it is not so with you. Here, every man is responsible for the character of rulers ; for the effect of public measures ; for the actions of his government ; for all these things are expressions of the popular will. It is not enough for you to form sentiments, wishes, and opinions ; each one is bound to do all in his power to affect the public mind, and secure the public welfare ; for this, like all other duties of religion, is an active duty.

But, we are too ready to adopt the feeling, if not the language of other countries, and to speak of our rulers as responsible for the state, that is, as responsible for ourselves. The truth is directly the reverse ; we are responsible for them. What are your rulers ? they are men—honored men—whom you entrust, for a season, with the exercise of your power. They do not govern you ; they are the

means by which you govern yourselves: they breathe your spirit; they do your pleasure; they cease to exist, the moment your verdict is against them. Where, then, should the responsibility rest? with those who possess a delegated power, or with those who possess the sovereign power? However wise and faithful the rulers may be, the people have power to undo all that they have done; however excellent the measures they propose, they cannot take effect, till they bear the sign manual of the sovereign. You have power to affirm or reverse their decisions; so that you are responsible for your actions and theirs also, and they, as rulers, only for their own.

Is it well, then—is it right, to show the indifference which many do? is it not their duty to take an interest in the subject of public men and measures—to ponder well, before they select the one, or set their seal upon the other? When acts are passed, which they do not approve, it is their duty to submit; when men, whom they do not approve, are set over them, it is their duty to make no factious opposition, but to support them, wherever their conscience will allow. But, there are some, who say, that they care not for these things, for such is the excellence of our system, that a few injudicious measures, and a few unworthy men, can do no seri-

ous harm. What do they mean, by saying, that the state does not depend on men? the state consists of men;—it depends wholly on men, who hold their destinies in their own hands. It is true that the people hold their rulers responsible, and may call them to account whenever they will: but if they care not what rulers they choose, will that account ever be exacted? No: they leave too much in the hands of their rulers, rather than too little; and if these are unfit men, the vessel of state is left at the mercy of the winds and waves. It cannot drift to its harbour; it cannot tell its own bearings; it cannot find its own way through the stormy ocean; a child may guide it in the trade winds; but when the sudden tempest rises, unless the best hands are ready at the helm, it will founder in the heart of the seas.

The third important duty of each member of the State is to remember his own power; to remember how much he can do—how much he can do, as an individual—to affect the public welfare; for all that he can do, he is bound to do; his responsibility is measured by his power. But how does it happen, that whenever duty is named, we begin to hear of the weakness of human nature? That same nature, which outruns the whirlwind in the chase of gain,—which rages like a maniac at the trumpet-call of



glory,—which laughs danger and death to scorn, when its least passion is awakened,—becomes weak as childhood, when reminded of the claims of duty. Remind man that he has power to do something for his country, and he answers that the reach of his arm is small ; that his voice cannot be heard far ; that he can make no wide and deep impression upon his fellow men. But there is power somewhere ; men cannot have it when united, if they have it not when apart : the cords which compose the sheet-anchor cable, are not singly as frail as the silkworm's thread. Where each has his portion of sovereignty, and where there is but one Power above him, let no man disclaim his duty.

So far from its being difficult for an individual to exert power in a free country, it is the greatest danger of such countries, that individuals can so easily gain power. The very indifference of which I have spoken, puts it within the reach of all who endeavor to obtain it. If they are ambitious, they will flatter suspicion to sleep ; they will secure the confidence of the people by wearing a disguise ; and when they are once trusted, they will make the state neglect its interests, till they have advanced their own. Whoever desires this power can have it. It requires not talent, but address—a kind of self-seeking instinct, like that which belongs to some of the

meanest animals in nature. What story does the history of all nations tell ? it assures us, that while the many were inattentive to their rights and duties, their power was gradually made over to the hands of one. It is true that the ambitious do not always succeed ; but the reason is, not that they find any difficulty in gaining power, but that, in playing their desperate game, they sometimes risk it on the chance of a single throw, and thus it is lost forever.

Can it be that, if the selfish and unprincipled are uniformly successful, those who really desire the welfare of their country can gain no power ? No ! such is not the order of nature. They may not be so conscious of the result of their exertions, because they do not wish to bring all those results home to themselves ; because they do not labor for themselves. Still, every good man exerts a power on others, the extent and importance of which, he does not know. There have been more instances than one, where a just and manly sentiment, expressed with the energy of conviction, has produced a wide and deep effect. Those who heard it have told it to their children, and they again to theirs ; and thus, words which passed at the same moment from the lips and from the mind of him who spoke them, have gone down into the hearts of thousands, all of whom have been struck with their truth, and have



made them a maxim of their lives. No ! there is ample power ; confidence alone is wanting ; and yet why should that be wanting, when we know that they who put their heart into any exertion, always carry it triumphantly through.

I was next to speak of the dangers of those who are born free. I might say at once, that they arise from neglecting these duties. Freedom implies duties as well as blessings ; and they who neglect the one, cannot long enjoy the other.

One great danger is that of indifference to our free institutions. It is evident, that some of our best men hold themselves apart from all share in our civil concerns. I do not refer to their declining office ; for, whatever may be the courtly language with which the servants of the people address their sovereign, no man is obliged to accept an office, when its duties can be as well performed by another. I refer to duties which no one can discharge by deputy. Such is the duty of sovereignty, and those who retreat from all interest in this, are doubtless false to their trust. For by so doing, they leave the field open to the ambitious and unworthy : they leave not only the action of government, but all institutions of social life, at the mercy of others ; they surrender all their establishments of benevolence, charity, and reform, to the hands most likely to destroy or abuse

them ; they see streams of false and depraving sentiment flowing every where, without making a single effort to heal the bitterness of their waters ; they see a power constantly growing up behind the throne of the people's sovereignty, greater than the throne itself, and yet they stand apart, looking on with indifference or disdain. Perhaps they even advise others whom they can influence, to be equally forgetful of their duty.

Do they say that by taking an interest in such things they lose their serenity ? that they are excited by opposition, and depressed by seeing the success of the undeserving ? let them remember, that there never yet was a duty of any importance, which could be discharged without sacrifice, self-denial, and exertion. But it is only when men engage in these things from passion, and not from principle, that they are thus painfully excited. The right discharge of every duty brings with it rest to the soul ; rest—not resembling the repose of stagnation, but the calm, self-purifying action of living waters. But when men enter upon these subjects with the violence of passion ; when they consent to enlist in the rank and file of party ; when they think only of party objects, and forget their duty as christians and as men, then they deserve to suffer ; and their injured conscience avenges its own wrongs, by kind-

ling those fires of passion, which become the slow torture of their souls.

It is true, that every man who does his duty is liable to be slandered ; and such attacks are painful, however despicable the source from which they proceed. But he, who, when on earth, endured all kinds of reviling, said, *The things which proceed out of the mouth, they defile the man.* A man cannot be permanently injured, but by what proceeds from his own mouth and his own heart. For your slanderer depends on you, to make good his charges ; unless you choose to give evidence by your conduct against yourself, he cannot sustain his charges ; they may deceive for a little while, but they will pass away. There have been those who were injured by slander ; but they were those who broke out into ungovernable passion, and whose passion settled down at last into sullen disdain ; they have been injured, indeed ; but they have done against themselves what no one could have done against them. There is nothing more lofty, than the native independence of the human soul. No man has any power over your character or happiness, except what you choose to give him. The soul may be lord of its own castle, if it will ; it can look down with calm defiance on all the enemies that surround it : unless it will descend to combat with them, it is immeasurably above their reach.

"The ascendancy of party is another danger of those who are born free. If a party were nothing but an association naturally formed by sympathy among those who agree in opinion, and who unite, in order to spread their sentiments by free and fair discussion, it would be easier than it is now, to believe all that we hear of the benefits and blessings of party. Such parties may have existed, and so long as the good of the country is their chief object of desire, their results may be harmless and happy. But I would ask, is not something more meant by the name, party? Do you not understand by it a combination of men, who are marshalled with the discipline of an army—trained to move with the submission of machines—and kept within their ranks, by an influence equal in power and severity to martial law? Do those who are thus enlisted dare, or even desire to think for themselves; and if any one, in the manly exercise of his duty, forms a sentiment adverse to that of his party, will he be praised for his independence, or shot as a deserter? If then, party may be an engine by which private judgment is prevented, and individual energy broken down; if the whole mass may receive an impulse from a single powerful hand, should not the free be ever upon their guard, that the interests of the state may not be swallowed in those of a party? The

Roman emperors were nothing but the heads of parties. Their subjects did not feel their chains, because they gave their suffrages as in better days ; and being permitted thus to retain the forms of freedom, they regarded it as a relief to pass from under the tyranny of millions, and submit to the tyranny of one.

I know that parties always have existed and always will exist in a free country. But must men therefore be slaves to them? can they not answer every good purpose, without abridging the freedom of individual thought and action? is there any need of their alienating those whom God and nature had united, so that they stand asunder in hopeless disunion, like fragments of the divided rock? is it worth while, to surrender heart and hand, mind and soul, to the dictation of party, when each must answer for himself to God? Let us use them as instruments merely, and never serve them as masters ; for voluntary bondage is the most degrading that man can endure. Let our political parties consist of those who agree in desiring the good of the country, and simply differ as to the means by which its welfare may be secured ; far different this from the party, which is an army in all but its arms. And let us hope that the time will come, when we shall no longer hear the sacred name of religion taken in



vain, by connecting it with the name of party. There can be no such thing as a religious party. It is a contradiction in terms : just as far as party spirit spreads in our hearts, does the gentleness of christianity forsake them. Let us hope that the time will come, when, as one offers the hand of fellowship, the other will not turn coldly away ; but may the great divisions of the religious world take example from the two great rivers of our country, which run side by side in the same channel ; for a time, each keeps its own current, its color and its bounds ; but at last they unite their waters, and flow on in a single tide to the deep.

Another danger is, that those who are born free will want confidence in their free institutions.— There will be violence at times in free states as in all others. There is no magic in the name of freedom, to disarm the passions of men ; they do not change their nature, when they become free ; and if any are visionary enough to expect that free states shall never be agitated, the natural result will be, that if a threatening of danger comes, it will fill them with dismay. Many of the best friends of our system doubt its self-sustaining power. But if they say, that our government is not strong enough, let them look round upon the kingdoms of the world, and say what other is stronger.

We have passed more than a generation under our glorious and happy constitution, and meantime all the governments of the old world have been shaken, and some of them have fallen. Does this prove that they are stronger? Ours too has had its trials; they have come over it heavy, dark, and frowning; but in the hour and power of darkness, there was present a redeeming spirit; and we have seen the rainbow upon them, as they rolled harmlessly away. Do you say that ours is only a government of opinion, and does this prove that others are stronger? there is not a government on earth, Barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, which could exist one hour, if the popular opinion rose with one voice against it. I know it is a fearful thing to see the spirit of discontent and disunion spread; to see those, who have fought side by side the battles of freedom, preparing, with desperate insanity, to shed each other's blood; but every man must do his duty, and none grow pale at the prospect, till the danger is even at the doors: for if other hope should fail us, the Lord God omnipotent reigns!—He orders the destinies of nations and of men: none are beneath his kindness, and none beyond his power

But while we should maintain our confidence in those institutions, which have brought us thus far in a path of light and happiness, which makes the

heart of the historian burn within him as he writes it down, let us not be insensible to our dangers.— There is danger ! the faithful watchmen have seen the sword coming upon the land ! they have blown the trumpet, and given the alarm from their towers ! Let no one deceive himself ; if one state proves entirely false to the union, that union is gone forever. If one of those beautiful planets, now seen in the evening sky, should dart “madly from its sphere,” can you believe that the same attraction would uphold the rest in their order, magnificence, and glory ? no ! and the moral sentiment, which holds the states of our Union in their system, can never retain the many, after it has failed to retain the one. But our destiny is in our own hands as a people ; if our state should perish, let us not charge Divine Providence with its ruin ; the blessing of God has never been wanting ; it dies by suicide, if it dies at all. And if it must indeed be so ; if our fathers and the prophets, who sat by its cradle, must be called to follow it to the grave, there never was, in all the dispensations of God, a more righteous retribution, than that which will fall upon our country ; and the cry of its death-bed repentance will rise to heaven, but too late to save it from despair.

Up to this time, our nation has been as *a building fitly framed ; beautiful for situation, the joy of*



*the whole earth* hath it been. Many a stranger hath gone round it, considering its bulwarks, and numbering its towers, with feelings of admiration and despair : the eye of the angel may have kindled as he looked down upon it, believing that there his prayers for the happiness of the race of man, were answered at last. But now—before the storms have risen or the floods have come—before the weather-stains have been seen upon its walls—now—they say that there are seams opening in its sides, and that a low and deep sound has been heard within it, as if its foundations were giving way.—If it is indeed to fall—God grant that it may not be !—but if it is indeed to fall—its ruins will be stones of stumbling and rocks of offence, to all the friends of freedom, so long as the world endures.

But there can be no fears for the cause of freedom in the world. It will go on ; it must go on ; though the failure of our experiment should put back its rising sun for ages, the world will rejoice in its light at last. If our nation should share the fate of all that have gone before it, some other race will at length possess the land, more enlightened and free than ours. But even if the order of nature should be suspended here ; if the ancient woods and waters reclaim their own again ; if the wild bird's scream and the beast's howl should be

heard where our villages are now, and the traveller come to search in vain for the spot where our cities stood, man will endure and improve ; the light and liberty of our nation will no more be missed, than that star of the seven, which has been for ages blotted from the sky. Do you sigh for your own insignificance—for the unimportance of your country ? No ! be grateful to your God—be grateful to Him, who has kindled in you the inspiring hope, that you may behold these changes from the many mansions on high. There, when this world rolls, like the small globe of the cabinet, far beneath you, you will see the holy and the free in all nations, however separated by distance, language, or opinion, moving on with even files in their march from glory to glory. Never despair then of the great cause ; it is safe and sure ; the everlasting arm is engaged to sustain it ; it will go on, as surely as

Our King forever reigns,  
Our God forever lives !

It only remains for me to discharge the prescriptive duty of this occasion, and to welcome you, Fathers and Guardians of the State, to your high deliberations again. We welcome a Chief Magistrate, whose generous self-devotion to the duties of his great office, even party spirit does not deny, and the people acknowledge with cheerful and will-

ing praise. We welcome to the second trust, a respectable citizen, whose character in private life is a full assurance that he will be faithful in a high public duty. We regret that he who has long held the same place in our councils, is to retire from that dignified station. We thank him for his public services, and our respect and honor shall go with him into the retirement of his choice. We welcome the Councillors and Legislators to the place, where their fidelity and wisdom has maintained our State in a prosperity which has never been exceeded. Permit me, with the respect which belongs to you, but with that freedom which belongs to the house of God, to remind you, that the blessing of freedom consists in our direct responsibility to heaven. If your presence here has served to impress this feeling more deeply upon your hearts, you will not regret that you have borne a part in the duties and devotions of the day. May the blessing of God rest on you and the State whose welfare depends so much upon you : and may we say, with the confidence of the royal prophet, *Thou blessest, oh God ! and it shall be blessed forever.*





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